

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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ABC CITES CLERKS FOR SELLING ALCOHOL TO MINORS

CITY OF CLAREMONT – Investigators of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) El Monte District Office in a joint effort with the City of Claremont Police Department, have cited three clerks for selling alcoholic beverages to minors during a Minor Decoy Operation. The action was the result of a compliance check operation in which minors under the direct supervision of the investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from retail licensees in the City of Claremont, California.

Those who sold to the minor face criminal charges that include a minimum fine of \$250.00 and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first offense. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the business' liquor license. That may include a fine; suspension or the permanent revocation of the license.

The minor decoy purchased alcohol from two out of fourteen locations that they visited. The following locations were located within the City of Claremont:

Village Market, 370 W. Second St. and
Ralph's, 835 w. Foothill Blvd.

During the course of this operation, other violations were observed, and an additional 6 arrests were made. These arrests included a clerk selling alcoholic beverages to three minors; minors purchasing alcoholic beverages; a minor in possession of a false identification and attempting to purchase alcoholic beverages; as well as possession of marijuana.

District Administrator, Hilarie Vazquez said "as the holiday season soon approaches, the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control and Claremont Police Department are taking a pro-active stance within the community that reduces the risks of young people under 21 years of age purchasing and consuming alcohol. Young people have a higher rate of drunk driving fatalities than the general adult population."

Minor Decoy Operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The

latest violation rate state-wide is almost 16 percent, or nearly one in five retail licensees selling to minors.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.